

APPLAUSE FOR THE UNC NATIONAL EXECUTIVE: OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE—Monday 10th June 2019.

Let me first applaud the action by the UNC Executive to formalize plans to participate in the Local Government Elections, due this year and the Constituency Executive Election in 2019. My humble opinion is that every Unit of the Party must start functioning efficiently, if we are to assist in the governing of this country soon. Because I attended the Diego Martin Regional Corporation Statutory Meetings for 25 months, (two years and one month) and witnessed the total failure of this PNM controlled Council to service the needs of the Region, I cannot honestly attempt to assist in putting a new Council in place, to function in such a badly functioning Local Government System. This philanthropic effort was made, in order to work for the 500 persons who voted for me in 2016 firstly and all others secondly. Bagatelle/Blue Basin has an Electorate of over 9,000 persons and 2,000 persons voted in 2016. 1,500 voted for Councillor Joey Lewis and 500 voted for me, over 7,000 persons have no interest in either party. He was paid an Honorarium and my expenses came out of my monthly pension, which at \$100.00 a meeting, came up to \$2,500.00, \$1,000 dollars short of my pension.

Had the EBC followed the lawful procedure to refund Candidates their \$2,000 deposits, who gain more than 12% of the votes cast, I getting 24.85%, this would have made the effort easier. In due course, that illegal action by the EBC will be challenged to determine where they have been given the authority not to refund deposits or send them elsewhere other than to the Candidates who deposited it.

I have seen Councillors cry at meetings, because their own party was insensitive to their efforts to do more for the Region. This occurs partly because, they were unaware of the power they have in the Municipal Corporation Act to get things done and partly because they put their loyalty for the party first, before the loyalty to do all in their power to SERVE THE PEOPLE first. Some of my contributions at Statutory Meetings have been shared over the two years and I eagerly look forward to the debate on the Local Government Bill now in Parliament.

A completed Constituency Executive Application Form, 2 Passport photographs, a Police Certificate of Character, or the receipt of having applied for one and a \$200.00 application fee, is a small price to pay to stop this government from turning all of us into refugees and we have a living example before our very eyes.

My 12 Forms are being completed and efforts are being made to get the other requirements by Wednesday the 12th day of June. A previous email echoed the need to take another look at the UNC Constitution and see where amendments are required, if any. Article 23 allows the Executive to guide in matters which are silent, ambiguous and difficult to interpret. If an amendment is suggested, Article 25 provides the procedure.

Having been acting in the position of Education and Research Officer for the Diego Martin North East Constituency for two years now and seeing the bad government by this PNM party, we are left with no other choice, but to become very active and remove them from office for a very long time. In two years, only one meeting of the Education Committee was called and the Chairman of the Committee and two Education and Research Officers attended. That must not happen in this next Term. All Units of the Party must get very active to save our beautiful country, for ourselves and our loved ones and the generations to come.

The Local Government Bill in Parliament now wants to pay Councillors and Aldermen remuneration instead of an Honorarium. Long overdue action, but raises the question of **National Insurance Contributions**. If Council Staff **must be full time employees and/or on no pay leave from other employers**, the NIB Act allows them to only collect 52 monthly contributions annually. All other employer payments are collected and banked, but not valued by the NIB for customer benefit and/or considered to be added when persons retire and are short of the 750 contributions, which have to be made to get a pension. **This Section 45 of the NIB Act in my humble view is called Fraudulent Concealment.** Fraud is a Crime and a Tort and this PNM government introduced it in 1972, 45 years now, collected and owns 20 Billion in Assets and in 2017, according to the Minister of Finance, 26,000 persons are no longer contributing to the system. **Someone must ask him, how many of those 26,000, got pensions and how many got a lump sum to survive for three years, during the debate to increase pensions.**

Signed.....Donald D. Berment, Specialist HSDS, NGA, DVC. 637-0924—383-6184.

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